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E 5037

23 APR 1948

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Registry Number E5037/1260/31

FROM

Foreign Office

No. G. D. Spinney

Dated 19th April

Received in Registry } 23rd "

Cable and Wireless in Palestine.

Gives record of meeting held on the 19th April regarding the future of Establishments of Cable and Wireless now in Palestine.

Last Paper

4922

References

(Print)

(How disposed of)

Ref, Amman 231 20. April

(Action completed)

(Index)

14/2/48

Next Paper

5717

(Minutes.)

D. Balfour 23/4

Mr Lamb, Communications Dept.

Mr Beith / in return

In P.P. Lewis Jones, Jerusalem Embassy. & Mr Parsons.

April 23

Mr Lewis Jones called at the F.O. on April 24th and was informed orally that it had already been arranged, before receipt of his letter, that the Jerusalem Cable & Wireless unit were to be transferred to Amman. He was much concerned to have the future possibilities of Jerusalem communications investigated with us and I suggested that Mr McIntyre, Telecommunications attaché at the U.S. Embassy, had better discuss this problem with our General Dept, since it is a highly technical question. I also told him that Mr McIntyre should get in touch ~~D. Balfour~~ with Mr Beith and that the really competent authority in this matter is the Colonial Office and Govt of Palestine.

D. Balfour 26/4

See further pp.

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23 APR 1948

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

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Record of a Meeting held at the Foreign Office on the 19th April: Establishments of Cable and Wireless in Palestine.

The following were present:

Mr. G.D. Spinney	Foreign Office
Mr H. Townshend	Post Office
Mr. Sharp	Post Office
Mrs. Mitchell	Post Office
Mr. Hall	Colonial Office
Mr. Higham	Colonial Office
Mr. Innes	Cable & Wireless
Mr. Chaplin	Cable & Wireless
Mr. Beith	Foreign Office

Cable and Wireless Ltd. had received, on the 17th April, a message from their station at Jerusalem to the effect that the military authorities had warned their staff that their safety could no longer be guaranteed, that no further reliance could be placed on promises of safety made by either Jews or Arabs, and that it would be advisable to evacuate the staff to Egypt or Transjordan. The military authorities could provide transport to move the staff and equipment to either country at any time up to the 1st May, if given reasonable notice. A similar message was later received from Haifa.

2. It was agreed that the questions of the Jerusalem station and the Haifa station should be considered separately, and that the future of the Jerusalem installation was the most pressing question. The equipment there consisted of a mobile transmitter ("Blue Train") which could fairly easily be moved and set up elsewhere. Unless it were intended to evacuate the staff and equipment to the United Kingdom, and to abandon all thought of their eventual return, there would be no object in removing them to Egypt. In Transjordan, on the other hand, the transmitter could be used to provide an emergency link with the Cable and Wireless system, via Cyprus or possibly the United Kingdom direct.

3. It was agreed that the most satisfactory solution would be to take advantage of the offer of military transport and to move the Jerusalem staff and equipment to Transjordan, provided that the consent of the Transjordan authorities could be obtained. The Foreign Office undertook to request H.M. Representative at Amman to approach the Transjordan Government in order to obtain permission to establish the transmitter in Transjordan territory as a temporary and emergency measure.

4. From the point of view of H.M. Government, this course of action had the advantage of assuring communications with Transjordan; since nearly all land-lines to that country pass through Jerusalem, there is some likelihood of their being cut or seized. For the same reason, it was thought probable that

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the Government of Transjordan would see every advantage in allowing the temporary installation of the mobile transmitter.

5. The future of the Haifa establishment, which consisted chiefly of cable-heads, was less urgent, and no decision could be reached until more accurate information was received about the local situation and the degree of military protection which would be available. Other British concerns such as the oil installation and the banks would presumably be kept in operation under military protection, possibly within a military zone, and it might be desirable to maintain the communication facilities provided by Cable and Wireless, whose Palestine representative would keep them informed of developments.

6. The Cable and Wireless station at Jaffa had a small wireless transmitter which would be left in the hands of the Arab staff there. A similar transmitter, which was to have been flown to Haifa as an emergency stand-by, would be diverted to the Tel-Aviv station and left in the hands of the Jewish staff there.

G.D. Spinney

19/4/48.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

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NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

on 17/4

Mr. Townshend, Director of the Telecommunication Branch of the G.P.O., telephoned to say that he had received a message from Cable & Wireless, Ltd., Jerusalem. The company had been warned by the military authorities that no further reliance could be placed on the guarantees of either Arabs or Jews, and had been advised to evacuate their staff.

A similar message was later received from Cable & Wireless at Haifa.

Sir Hugh Dow, whom Mr. Townshend suggested should be consulted, is not yet back in England. A meeting has been arranged at the F.O. between Messrs. Townshend, Hall (C.O., Communications) Higham (C.O., Palestine), Beith, [redacted] members of Cable & Wireless, & myself.

19/4

[illegible]

Registry No. W

~~Top Secret~~
Secret.
~~Confidential~~
~~Restricted~~
~~Open~~

G.D.S.

CYPHER

T.O.,

20 April, 1948.

Despatched 2 25 P. M.

Draft.

H.M. Rep.,
AMMAN.

Telegram.

No. 231

(*Date*) 20 April

Repeat to :—

JERUSALEM.
No.....
Dated.....

B.M.E.O.
No.....
Dated.....

Eastern Dept.
20 Apr. 20

~~Top Secret~~
~~Confidential~~
~~Restricted~~
Cypher.

Distribution :—

Departmental
~~No. 2.~~

Copies to :—

IMMEDIATE.

SECRET.

Addressed to Amman telegram No. 231 of April 20th repeated Jerusalem and B.M.E.O. for information.

Cable and Wireless Limited Jerusalem have been warned by military authorities that safety of their staff can no longer be guaranteed and have been advised to evacuate to Transjordan. Army is prepared to transport staff and their mobile transmitter if requested before May 1st to do so.

2. We are in favour of this move which should also commend itself to Transjordan Government. Present communications with Amman pass through Jerusalem and are likely to be cut. Proposed evacuation would provide wireless telegraphy link with entire Cable and Wireless system via Cyprus or United Kingdom.

3. If you see no objection please approach Transjordan authorities ~~Please approach Government to which you are accredited~~ with request that permission be granted for temporary establishment of transmitter on Transjordan territory.

4. Grateful for early reply.

G.B.S.
20/4.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

(3664) Wt.11696/147 100,000 6/47 A.& E.W.Ltd. Gp.685

[This telegram is of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorised recipient and not passed on]

Cypher/OTP

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

Secret

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO AMMAN

No. 231
20th April, 1948

D. 2.25 p.m. 20th April, 1948

Repeated to: Jerusalem
British Middle East Office No. 313

IMMEDIATE
SECRET

Addressed to Amman telegram No. 231 of April 20th repeated for information to Jerusalem and British Middle East Office.

Cable and Wireless Limited Jerusalem have been warned by military authorities that safety of their staff can no longer be guaranteed and have been advised to evacuate to Transjordan. Army is prepared to transport staff and their mobile transmitter if requested before May 1st to do so.

2. We are in favour of this move which should also commend itself to Transjordan Government. Present communications with Amman pass through Jerusalem and are likely to be cut. Proposed evacuation would provide wireless telegraphy link with entire Cable and Wireless system via Cyprus or United Kingdom.

3. If you see no objection please approach Transjordan authorities with request that permission be granted for temporary establishment of transmitter on Transjordan territory.

4. Grateful for early reply.

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INWARD TELEGRAM.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

Cypher (C.T.P.)

FROM PALESTINE (Gen. Sir A. Cunningham)

D. 22nd April, 1948.
R. 23rd " " 02.00 hrs.

IMMEDIATE
No.1085. Secret.

Addressed to the Secretary of State.

Repeated Amman No.1133,
B.M.E.O. No.58,
UKDEL,
New York No.1134 (Washington please pass).

Your telegram No.1544 containing Foreign Office telegram No.231 to Amman, not repeated to UKDEL.

Move of Cable and Wireless to Amman.

I should have liked to be consulted on this matter which has been under discussion here for some time. At the time of move TELECOMMUNICATIONS from Jerusalem will be cut for at least two days unless wireless link with Haifa now being tried out can be established. This link with Haifa and later with Amman would suffice to carry Government traffic only, so that press and other messages from Jerusalem would not be handled or only with great delay. Police wireless net is already overloaded since almost all land lines are out of operation. Army cannot assist and their signals unit is now split between Jerusalem and Haifa.

2. Importance of cutting out Jerusalem from communication with the outside world in four days' time should be recognised, particularly at this stage.

Distributed to:-

R.243
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